

From a Canadian perspective, the Review Conference was highly successful in its consideration of issues related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, nuclear trade and safeguards. Canada played an active role in the elaboration of language on full-scope safeguards as a condition of nuclear supply that received broad support.

In addition, Canada launched an initiative at the Conference regarding the extension of export controls on nuclear materials to include tritium — a material necessary for the detonation of nuclear devices but currently not subject to international export controls. The Conference agreed on language calling for “early consultations among states to ensure that their supply and export controls are appropriately coordinated,” in reference to tritium and other materials and equipment. Canada intends to pursue efforts to conclude international tritium export control guidelines in the near future.

In another welcome development, parties called for an examination of ways to widen the application of safeguards in nuclear-weapon states, and for a clearer separation of those states’ peaceful and military nuclear facilities. Agreed language also included a call on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to make fuller use of the inspection rights at its disposal, particularly its right to use a form of challenge inspection to clarify questions of compliance.

The Review Conference achieved constructive, consensus language on almost all issues related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It reaffirmed the goals of Article IV of the NPT, particularly that of encouraging NPT parties to engage in the fullest possible transfer of nuclear technology and nuclear items for peaceful purposes. The report of the Conference committee dealing with peaceful uses recognized the special needs of developing countries in this regard, and reaffirmed the desirability of giving preference to NPT parties in transfers of peaceful nuclear technology.

As had been anticipated by many observers, consideration of the disarma-

ment aspect of the NPT (Article VI) proved to be the most difficult. Canada played an active role in all Article VI deliberations. The Canadian delegation advocated a balanced review of developments in disarmament since 1985. This would have entailed acknowledging the important — and unprecedented — progress towards nuclear disarmament, as well as the significant positive developments in negotiations concerning non-nuclear weapons and forces. At the same time, Canada recognized that much remains to be done to fully realize the disarmament goals set out in Article VI.

The final days of the Conference saw marathon negotiations in an effort to find consensus language on Article VI questions. Although much common ground was found, differences of view — particularly on the question of a comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT) — proved to be insurmountable. The President of the Conference made a last attempt to achieve a final document by proposing text that summarized the differences. This initiative was unsuccessful, as one delegation (Mexico) objected to adoption of the President’s proposed compromise.

The Review Conference’s inability to agree on a final document was a disappointment to Canada and many other countries. However, in Canada’s view, the agreed language on full-scope safeguards, tritium controls and other matters represents a strong commitment by NPT parties to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Canada will continue its initiatives in these areas.

In the disarmament area, differences of approach reflected divergent views among states on such key questions as how to proceed to the goal of a CTBT. Canada believes that while NPT parties should respect one another’s approaches, they should not allow their differences to obscure the fact that a strong NPT is in the security interests of the entire international community. Every effort should be made to ensure that this vital treaty continues to be strengthened. ■

Canada’s Opening Statement to NPT Review Conference

The following are excerpts from the statement delivered by Ms. Peggy Mason, Ambassador for Disarmament, to the Fourth Review Conference of the NPT in Geneva on August 24.

Canada comes to this important Review Conference confident that together we will reinforce the credibility and strength of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and inject new impetus into our collective search for a world characterized by peace and international security without nuclear weapons. We believe that developments in international relations since our last review conference, including in the areas of arms control and disarmament, provide a positive background conducive to achieving a successful outcome to this meeting...

The NPT is the linchpin of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. It serves as an effective barrier to the horizontal spread of nuclear weapons and, at the same time, sets a framework for nuclear and general disarmament. In addition, it reinforces the verification role of IAEA safeguards and contributes to peaceful international nuclear cooperation and commerce. The NPT is thus a vital instrument for international peace, security and economic well-being in the modern world.

Canada has played an important role in the areas of non-proliferation, safeguards and nuclear cooperation. It is therefore natural that Canada’s goal at this Review Conference must be to reaffirm the Treaty’s accomplishments in these areas and urge firmer commitments to appropriate goals where necessary — both to attract stronger support for the Treaty and, if possible, wider adherence to it by those countries that may not have fully appreciated its benefits. As a firm and strong supporter of the NPT, Canada wishes to work actively with other states at this Review